

Zachariah Carpenter House  
20 Arnold Street  
Providence  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-176

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
76-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-176

## ZACHARIAH CARPENTER HOUSE

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RI,  
4-PROV.,  
76-

Address: 20 Arnold Street, Providence, Providence County,  
Rhode Island.

Plat 16, Lot 337.

Present Owner  
and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. John D. Mitchell

Present Use: Dwelling.

Brief Statement  
of Significance: Built about the end of the eighteenth century,  
this house is somewhat smaller than its neighbors  
from the same period being four bays wide rather  
than five, but it preserves many characteristic  
details.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1795 Christopher Arnold sells for 75 £ to Zachariah Carpenter lot #8 on the S side of Arnold Street . . . Bounded: N by Arnold Street 45'; S by Eber Coleman, and Jotham Ham 45'; E by Sarah Godfrey 78'; W by James Arnold. . . Deed Book 28, page 199, in Providence City Hall.
- 1798 U.S. Tax list Zachariah Carpenter, self-occupied. House 20' x 28', 2-story..wood, unfinished. Valuation \$500.
- 1801 Zachariah Carpenter sells for \$1925 to Richard Godfrey, Lot #8 in the division of Christopher Arnold's lands, with DWELLING HOUSE and other improvements. Bounded: N by Arnold Street; E by William Church; S by Eber Coleman and Chas Spooner; W by Charles Spooner, the same purchased from Chris Arnold in 1795. . . Deed Book 28, page 318, in Providence City Hall.
- 1805 Richard Godfrey sells for \$1600 to John Gladding, mariner, a certain lot with dwelling house and other improvements, Bounded: N by Arnold Street 45'; E by William Church 78'; S by heirs of Colville Dana and Chas Spooner 45'; W by Charles Spooner. . . Deed Book 31, page 121, in Providence City Hall.

- 1806 FIRE RECORD John Gladding..S side of Arnold St...  
wood..2 stories high 1 chimney, well finished. . .  
mss. fire insurance records of the Providence  
Mutual Insurance Co. at the office of the Providence  
Washington Insurance Co., Providence, R. I. , Vol.  
1, policy #192.
- 1813 FIRE RECORD John Gladding, self occupied, wood..  
32' front, 34' front to rear..2 stories high. . .  
Mss fire insurance records of the Providence  
Mutual Insurance Co. at the Rhode Island Historical  
Society, Providence, R. I., Vol. 4, policy #1333.

This property was in the Gladding family until

- 1938 Mary T Gladding Babcock sells to John D. Mitchell  
and wife Doris a certain tract of land Bounded:  
S by C Andrade and C Pacheco 41.47' N by Arnold  
Street 46.19'; E by Pease 80' and Pacheco 29';  
W by Mohawk Street 39.15' and by grantor 70'. . .  
Deed Book 801, page 194, in Providence City Hall.

Occupants of #20 ARNOLD STREET. . .Providence Directory

1798 Zachariah Carpenter  
1813 John Gladding, grocer  
1824 " " "  
1844 " " "  
1848 " and Benjamin Gladding  
1866 Benjamin Gladding

2. Date of erection: c. 1798. The 1798 U. S. tax list  
described this house as 20' x 28', two-story, wood, un-  
finished. The house is larger than 20' x 28' and cor-  
responds rather to the descriptions in the 1806 and  
1813 fire insurance records. Either the house was enlarged,  
or the 1798 dimensions are in error which seems more  
likely, since the 20' x 28' dimensions do not seem to  
fit any part of the house that may have been built first.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey  
for the Providence Preservation Society  
December 1961

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Though this house is somewhat  
smaller than its neighbors, from the same period, being  
four bays wide rather than five bays, it has the same

general character, with typical window lintels, a good example of an Ionic frontispiece, and interior detail.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Main block faces north, two stories, 32' x 34', unbalanced four bay front (one window left of entrance, two at right), two-story rear wing.
2. Foundations: Fieldstone on sides and rear, regular ashlar in front.
3. Wall construction: Clapboards, graduated exposure wider toward top, beaded corner boards.
4. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: New six panel front door with new top light. Entrance frontispiece with fluted Ionic pilasters and pediment, semicircular top light with key block, modillion cornice, two stone steps.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Six over six light double hung windows, unrelieved frames. First floor windows have large splayed wood lintels, second floor windows have molded cornices, continuous with bed mold of roof cornice. Adjustable louvered shutters on front. Later bay window on west side.
5. Roof:
  - a. Shape and covering: Gable, shingles
  - b. Cornice: Molded cornice, returned slightly at corners of end walls.
6. Chimneys: Large center brick chimney.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Entrance hallway flanked by rooms of unequal widths, one bay wide on east, two bays on west. Main block two rooms deep with parlors at northwest and southwest, small room at northeast, dining room at southeast, kitchen in rear wing. Bedrooms on second floor in similar arrangements. Two finished rooms in attic of main block.

2. Stairways: Main stair in entrance hall, straight run with 90° turn at top, open string, sawn scroll step end ornaments, molded handrail, three rectangular balusters per step, turned newel. Enclosed U-shape winding stair in rear wing. Stairway winds against chimney from second floor to finished third floor.
3. Flooring: Later, hardwood strip flooring on first floor.
4. Trim: Ceiling cornices with frets or bands of reeding. Archway with engaged colonettes in southwest parlor. Chair rail with reeding in some places. Later, more complex moldings on trim in rear wing. Interior folding paneled shutters.
5. Hardware: White porcelain knobs.
6. Lighting: Electric
7. Heating: Central heating with radiators. Three fireplaces on each floor with molded wood mantels; reeding, scrollwork or fret trim on first floor mantels; molded crosseted fireplace surrounds on second floor in northwest and southwest bedrooms.

D. Site

General setting and orientation: Main block adjacent to sidewalk at the north front side, narrow side yards, larger rear yard, lot slopes down toward the rear; residential neighborhood.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect  
National Park Service  
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